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GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #16-04

TO: All State District Superintendents

FROM: Steve Canavero, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Nevada Board of Education Regulation on *Read by Grade Three Act* solidifies Nevada's comprehensive plan for early literacy

Background

SB 391, Nevada's *Read by Grade Three Act*, was designed to dramatically improve student achievement by ensuring that all students will be able to read proficiently by the end of the third grade. SB 391 requires all school districts and governing bodies of charter schools to develop locally based literacy plans aimed at improving the literacy of all K-3rd grade students. This statute also requires every K-3 site to designate a reading learning strategist to oversee literacy-based professional learning activities. SB 391 emphasizes the implementation of early intervention measures in reading achievement for K-3 students. Each site is required to conduct progress monitoring of the reading performance of all K-3 students with assessments that have been approved by the Nevada State Board of Education through regulation. While a student being retained for a second year of third year is possible, these guidelines should greatly increase the success of students reading at a proficient level at the end of third grade.

SB 391 mandates that all Nevada public school districts and charter schools must submit a local K-3 literacy plan to the Nevada Department of Education. NDE identified March 1, 2016 as the deadline for these submissions. During the month of February NDE provided several technical assistance webinars to assist districts and charter schools engaged in this process. As of this date, all Nevada local K-3 literacy plans have been submitted to NDE. NDE staff is presently facilitating the review process of these documents in order to provide feedback for required re-submissions. One profound accomplishment is that all Nevada K-3 local literacy plans were written in alignment to the 2015 Nevada State Literacy Plan. This one action marks the beginning of the establishment of an entire statewide system of K-3 literacy alignment across Nevada.

Phase I of SB 391 resulted in \$4.8 million distributed in the first year of the biennium. Phase II of SB 391 resulted in \$22 million allocated to Nevada's school districts.

Nevada State Board of Education Adopts Regulations Aimed at Providing Early Literacy Support for Students and Professional Development for Teachers

In a unanimous vote the Nevada State Board of Education approved key regulations in June related to *Read by Grade 3 Act* (SB 391). The approved regulations establish an aligned system of reading assessments and training across the entire state. For the first time in its history Nevada will have a statewide literacy network grounded in common literacy data and vocabulary. The Board's vote approved **four key sections** of this regulation (Chapter 388 of NAC).

1. **K-3 Reading Assessments Adopted:** Nevada's *Read by Grade 3 Act* required that the State Board of Education adopt assessments to identify struggling readers in Kindergarten and Grades 1-3. Once identified students would be provided with an individualized literacy plan created in partnership with the parent, teacher, literacy specialist, and school principal. The Board selected the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment – the highest scoring assessment from the Request for Information the Nevada Department of Education released earlier this year – as the required reading assessment to be utilized across all Nevada district and charter schools. All schools will be required to use the assessment starting with the 2017-2018 school year. For Kindergarten, the State Board approved the developmentally appropriate Brigance III Kindergarten Entry Assessment to serve as the required 30-day Kindergarten screener. The winter assessment benchmark in kindergarten will then serve as the beginning point for the required use of the MAP reading assessment.
2. **The Role and Responsibilities of the Read by Grade 3 Learning Strategist:** The Nevada State Board of Education also adopted regulations to bring more clarity to the role of the newly created Literacy Specialists. Literacy Specialists have four primary responsibilities in their new literacy coaching role:
 - a. To assist and provide leadership to the local governing bodies in the creation of local literacy plans (as required by SB 391).
 - b. To provide the professional development for the K-4 teachers.
 - c. To provide any additional instruction to teachers and administrators on the implementation of the required K-3 assessments.
 - d. To provide instruction and support for the parents or guardians of pupils who have been identified as struggling in reading.
3. **Required Training of Read by Grade 3 Learning Strategists:** Educators who serve in the Literacy Specialist role will be required to facilitate the literacy work of all K-4 classroom teachers. Nine specific training components will be required:
 - a. The standards for kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3 included in the Nevada Academic Standards (NVACS).
 - b. The 2015 Nevada State Literacy Plan.
 - c. Evidence-based practices for instruction and intervention concerning literacy.

- d. Methods for screening for and intervention concerning dyslexia and other reading disabilities.
 - e. Implementing the State Board approved K-3 reading assessments.
 - f. Methods for effectively delivering and receiving constructive feedback.
 - g. Methods for creating monitoring plans for K-3 students who have been identified as struggling in reading.
 - h. The statewide performance evaluation for teachers (NEPF).
 - i. The national standards for literacy coaching.
4. **Required Training of Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, and Fourth Grade Teachers:** The Literacy Specialists will also be required to train K-4 grade teachers in public and charter school settings. This training will help to ensure common alignment in the supports students will receive and equip teachers with tools they need to best serve the needs of struggling readers. Literacy Specialist led teacher trainings will be required to include:
- a. The standards for kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3 included in the Nevada Academic Standards (NVACS).
 - b. The 2015 Nevada State Literacy Plan.
 - c. Evidence-based practices for instruction and intervention concerning literacy.
 - d. Methods for screening for and intervention concerning dyslexia and other reading disabilities.
 - e. Implementing the State Board approved K-3 reading assessments.
 - f. Methods for effectively delivering and receiving constructive feedback.
 - g. Methods for using data to improve literacy instruction.
 - h. Methods for maintaining collaborative and reflective feedback.

Next Steps

The 2016-2017 school year will serve as a transition year for all K-3 public and charter programs across Nevada. The Nevada Department of Education will guide local educators as they make the transition to full implementation of the new assessment in 2017-2018. This year will also serve as the first full year of implementation for Nevada's newest role in early literacy – the learning strategist.

